RETAIL PUBLIC MARKETS.

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AT intervals of a few years marked changes occur in the nature of the questions which engage the attention of municipal officials and civic organizations the country over. At one time political reform will be the paramount issue, then an antivice crusade. Another year may see efforts concentrated on the reduction of infant mortality, the upbuilding of the public park and playground system, the construction of boulevards, or the installation of improved street-lighting systems. The fact that these agitations are prompted by the most apparent economic or social needs of that particular period is quite self-evident.

Just now the question of cheaper and more efficient methods of distributing and marketing food products, particularly fresh farm produce, is probably receiving as much general attention and investigation as any other. Inasmuch as a successful solution will redound to the financial advantage of both the rural and urban populations, the reason for such widespread interest is a matter of easy determination, and especially so when the upward tendency of food prices is considered.

The problem of securing good products more cheaply, thus making an appreciable reduction in the average budget which the housewife must set aside for food, is proving a baffling one to every agency concerned in the quest. Cities, in an attempt to aid their populations, are awaking to the fact that they have been very lax in assuming proper obligations in relation to their food supply. Their first impulse is to see what other cities are doing, and in most cases their investigations end in a demand for a public market. They call for a place where the near-by producer can market his wares direct to the people. More often, however, and especially in the larger cities, the outcome is a farmers' wholesale market, or a retail market where the speculative dealers are in the majority. Unfortunately, city officials,

chambers of commerce, and civic-improvement leagues usually do not keep in close touch with the economic developments surrounding the marketing of farm products, so they find it hard to understand why there should be any trouble in establishing just the kind of market they want, and, along with it, securing the exact results for which they are seeking.

There are, however, some very difficult problems to work out in the successful establishment of even such an old-fashioned and apparently simple institution as a public market. Although a century ago the task was simple, the present complexity of the marketing system and the extraordinary demands in the way of service which are evidenced on all sides have greatly increased the difficulty of suiting an old-time project of this kind to more modern life. The attempt is met with disappointing results in a great many cases, due, however, to no fault of the principle itself. Public retail markets—old, dilapidated, mismanaged, and filthy—are numerous. Well-equipped, sanitary markets, of modern construction, efficiently conducted, are scarce. This is in reality no reflection on the possibilities of municipal retail markets, but only on the treatment that has been accorded them by most city governments. Being usually left to run themselves, they have done so, quite naturally selecting the path of least resistance, which, unfortunately, is down grade.

Given a fair start and continued good business management, a municipal retail public market should be a success in any average city that is large enough to support such a project. This statement is made with due regard to the fact that the success of an institution of this kind means more than simply fair patronage. The municipal retail market has certain functions to perform for the community, and unless it responds in a satisfactory way, after being given a fair trial, there is little excuse for its existence.

There are many who condemn a market unless, from the beginning, it affords lower prices. While this is a result that can reasonably be expected in well-directed institutions, nevertheless, plenty of time must be given for the balancing of the many factors that enter into price establishment. When a market is once firmly on its feet it would seem that a city could legitimately ask from it the following service:

It should give to patrons who will pay cash for their purchases and carry them home a dollar's worth of actual products for a dollar. In other words, when a buyer does not demand or use credit and delivery service he should not be charged for it.

Municipal market prices should also reflect to the consumer the saving which is made possible to the dealer through low rent for his stall and equipment, as well as any other reductions in overhead expense.

Patrons should be able to find at a market a larger and fresher assortment of food products than the average private establishment offers.

Due to the possibility of closer official inspection, the consumer has a right to look for increased protection in the matters of quality, weight, and measure.

When once a city has committed itself to a municipal market system, it is immediately confronted with innumerable problems. So little information is available on the subject that it usually must become a matter of experimentation. A serious mistake generally is made at this point. Instead of having a competent engineer or architect carefully study the problem and report, it is usually the custom to send a delegation of city officials on a junketing tour, some of whom may incidentally observe the municipal markets in the places visited. This would not be so detrimental if only the cities inspected were possessed of even semimodel marketing institutions. More often they are of a mediocre type, and, although possibly giving fair service, are far from fit to serve as patterns when the possibilities of a modern municipal retail market are considered.

It is to offer some suggestions to interested cities which may possibly help them in solving the difficulties confronting the successful establishment of a retail market, that the various questions which naturally come up at such a time are treated herewith in some detail.

LOCAL NEED AND DEMAND FOR A MARKET.

Inasmuch as the usefulness of a market depends on the support given it by the consumers, the tributary producers, and the local dealers, it is well worth while, before expending

time and money on the project, to determine the attitude of these people toward it. In meetings, or through the press, it is possible to ascertain the general sentiment. If all are apathetic and there is no definitely expressed desire for a market, then a city's energies might be turned more profitably to other lines of improvement.

Certain types of population lend themselves more readily to the municipal-market idea than others. Cities having a large foreign element and a well-developed middle class usually give most loyal support to such a project. Strange as it may seem, it is not always the very poor sections of a city that afford best patronage to a retail market. This is probably explained largely by the fact that the indigent class, as a rule, is quite dependent on the credit system. Lack of education in economic marketing and, to some extent, improvidence, are also contributing factors.

The size of a city and the efficiency of its marketing facilities have a direct bearing on the need for a public market. While a few small places could be named which have useful farmers' markets, still it is generally found that in the case of cities below 25,000 population or thereabouts such a large proportion of the homes are satisfactorily served by the grocer and the door-to-door peddling of the farmer and huckster that there is not sufficient patronage left to support a city market of any consequence. This statement is not to be construed as asserting that a profitable city marketing system could not be worked out for these smaller places. In such cities it should be quite possible, when conditions warrant, at least to furnish the near-by producers a designated place to assemble once or twice a week and sell their products at retail.

However, those cities which reach the 25,000 to 50,000 class may well consider the advantages of a municipal market, particularly if the charges of their established retail agencies are unduly high or the service inefficient. Many cities complain that they suffer from a dearth of fresh produce, especially farm and orchard products, or that there appears to be a lack of competition among local dealers resulting in abnormally high prices. In such places a skillfully managed city market should be of great value.

The success of a public market often depends upon the size and character of its "farmers' line" (Pl. X, fig. 1). There seems to be an innate desire on the part of housewives to buy from the producer and in the open. Consequently it behooves a city to study the tributary rural population. If a good truck-growing section is already developed within driving distance, there should be no trouble about lack of supplies for the market, unless the growers produce their crops in such large quantities that they are forced to sell at wholesale. If there is little truck growing in the region, however, methods of encouraging the farmers to take up that work should be employed. Such an outlet for products as a good public market creates is, in itself, an incentive to growers to engage in truck-crop production and usually aids greatly in developing a near-by food supply.

TYPE OF MARKET.

The form of market which seems to be meeting with most favor at present is a combination of an inclosed building (for the sale of meat, fish, butter, and other products that should be protected) and an open space where the market wagons of farmers and hucksters can be accommodated (Pl. X, figs. 2 and 3). The street curb adjacent to the market hall is often used for the latter purpose, but a location inside of the property line is better as a rule. This open section (Pl. XI, fig. 1) should be equipped with sheds, if possible, for the protection of both buyer and seller, as is shown in Plate XI, figure 2.

As previously suggested, some cities that are not in position to equip and give proper support to an inclosed market house can often secure valuable service from open markets for farmers, or for farmers, hucksters, and pushcart men. This type of market can be located along the curb of a suitable street (Pl. XI, fig. 3) or on some convenient vacant plot. The main defects of such a market are that it affords little or no protection, sanitary or otherwise, to the products offered for sale, nor does it shelter the seller or his patrons from the elements. Good sheds perform this service to a certain extent but are often inadequate. A greater weakness, however, lies in the fact that this style

of market, if supplied largely by local growers, affords, as a rule, satisfactory service only during the months of production. If the municipal public-market idea is good, it should be applied all the year around and to as many food products as is logically possible.

The open market, however, has some advantages, particularly for the city that is just launching a municipal market policy. It can be started with little expense of time and money; it can be moved easily, providing the first location is found to be faulty; and it can be used as a means to determine the degree of support which will be given the project as a whole by both producer and consumer. The factors of demand, location, and cost are all important in a new venture of this kind, and the open market serves cheaply and well as a demonstration project. It should also promote interest and enthusiasm in a community for this form of more direct dealing.

An inclosed market building with no provision for producers' or hucksters' wagons usually finds favor only in the larger cities, where open space is not available.

LOCATION OF THE MARKET.

If there is one consideration more important than another, when the possibilities of success of a public market are being weighed, that one is location. Many a city has invested a goodly sum in a retail market only to find that they had foredoomed it to failure by having selected an out-of-the-way place. An example of such misfortune is evidenced in Plate X, figure 2.

The factors to be considered in choosing a site vary with the size of the city. The first question to be decided is whether the market should be located in a residential section or at a more central point. Both plans have their advocates. Theoretically, small public markets placed in the more densely populated residential sections of a city and within walking distance of a large number of housewives, would be best situated to give the service expected of such institutions. Under certain conditions this system may be advisable, but unfortunately it does not seem to be practicable in the majority of places. Most large cities

owning public markets have at least one, centrally located in the business section, which is larger and better equipped than the rest. To show the effect of such a market on the smaller markets in residential districts, it is only necessary to cite an incident which recently took place in one of the large middle-western cities.

After prolonged consideration, an official committee submitted a plan to the mayor covering an extension of the municipal market system. It contained a map of the city, with markets indicated at several points in the residential sections, where the population was fairly dense. The recommendation appeared very logical. The mayor submitted the plan for criticism to the superintendent of city markets, who in this case happened to be a student of the municipal-market subject. He agreed that on paper the plan looked good, but asserted that in practice it stood small chance of being successful. To explain his stand, he took the mayor and committee in the municipal automobile to the corner where the city's one residential market was then situated. It was originally a well-equipped, inviting little market, but now trade was dull and the place appeared unthrifty. On the same corner, awaiting a street car to take them to the large central market down town, stood six housewives with marketing baskets on their arms.

That roughly tells the story of why small markets in residential centers do not, as a rule, prove satisfactory. Farmers drive past them with their loads to sell on the larger markets where their trade is assured. Patrons go to the same places to get the advantage of a larger assortment of produce, and also because they usually have to go to the business district to shop anyway. It should be noted, too, that the value of a residential market is more subject to depreciation from shifting population (Pl. XII, fig. 1), than is that of a market more centrally located.

There are, without doubt, several examples of what might be termed residential markets that are now giving just the service desired of them. Possibly in the future such a plan will demonstrate its merits more conclusively and become an effective factor in city marketing systems.

There is reason to believe that in some places "neighborhood farmers' markets" may operate satisfactorily during

the growing season. With a curb or a vacant lot costing nothing as a site, and a few farmers who are willing to sell in this manner, there is everything to gain and very little risk in making the experiment. Denver is testing it out, and the development of the plan will be watched with interest (Pl. XII, fig. 2).

The experience of the majority of cities, then, and especially in the case of larger municipal markets, seems to favor central locations. In a city of small or medium size, where only one retail market is contemplated, this market doubtless should be placed as near the business center as it is possible to secure the necessary land. Rather than remove it far from the most accessible point, it would probably be advisable to use a section of a wide street, as has been the plan in Cincinnati (Pl. XII, fig. 3) and as in the case of the old Lexington Market in Baltimore. Inasmuch as the demands of traffic must be heeded, when a street is to be used for either an inclosed or a curb market it is sometimes better to choose one immediately adjacent to a main thoroughfare than to cause undue congestion, but the site chosen must be very accessible. If a retail market is to be combined in any way with a wholesale project, then entirely new factors, not discussed here, enter to influence the decision.

In the case of a large city that is developing a series of retail market buildings the best plan seems to be to locate them in the subsidiary business centers. Nearly every such city is divided into several more or less localized sections, as the north, south, east, or west side, each of which has its principal business district. There is much less danger of these centers changing so as to leave the market stranded than there is in the case of a residential section, and they usually have sufficient tributary trade to give proper support to such an institution.

In judging the accessibility of a market site two factors are of prime importance: the number of patrons who will walk to the market, and the street-car facilities. A market with a large tributary population within walking distance may save hundreds of dollars a day to these buyers in car fares. On the other hand, the patron from a distance should be able to ride very near the market entrance with as few transfers as possible.

In the case of retail markets which will be used extensively as an outlet by producers, a city should consider carefully the possibilities of trolley freight service in connection with various locations. Growers who live at some distance can often use this method for the transportation of their goods to great advantage, providing cars can be switched to the receiving platform of the market. Interurban lines are bound steadily to become more important factors in the handling of farm products, and it is advisable that full provision be made to develop the service.

In selecting a retail-market location, the demands of the future should always be kept in mind. Provision for expansion of the market plan as the city grows has been too often overlooked by municipalities—a fact which applies with equal truth to other civic projects.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE MARKET.

Other conditions being equal, a market house which has good breadth (Pl. XIII, fig. 1) is preferable to the long, narrow structure that it is necessary to build when erected in a street. The broader market lends itself to a more desirable arrangement of stalls and general equipment, while the handling of products is facilitated.

The object which every city should strive to attain in the construction of a municipal market is the highest degree of convenient and sanitary equipment at the minimum of cost. Ornate public buildings may be expedient as a rule, but, in the case of municipal markets, beauty and expensive construction should be strictly subservient to utility and economy. The mission of a market is to increase the efficiency and decrease the cost of food distribution; consequently, needless expenditure of money is out of harmony with the purpose to be fulfilled.

The use of wood in market construction is inexpedient in most cases. The constant application of water in cleaning makes woodwork very unsatisfactory. Tile, concrete, brick, steel, marble, and glass are the type of substances which answer best the demands of durability and sanitation.

It is not intended in this article to go into detail regarding the interior equipment of a municipal retail market. How-

ever, some suggestions as to matters often overlooked, and of desirable features now being used in the more modern establishments (Pl. XIII, fig. 2) will serve to show what points should receive special study and attention.

All counters should be raised far enough from the floor to permit of thorough scraping and washing underneath.

Floors should be of nonabsorbent material and so laid that they will drain thoroughly. Ample arrangements for flushing are necessary.

Inside walls should be of nonabsorbent material to the height of about 6 feet.

Meat, poultry, fish, oyster, and butter counters, at least, should be constructed of some of the more impervious materials, such as glass, marble, tile, soapstone, or slate.

It is very desirable that such counters be provided with refrigerating equipment that will keep the products cool and free from flies. These results can be obtained even in semi-open counters by installing a refrigerating coil in back, on a level with the products displayed, while plate glass is placed vertically in front and horizontally over a section of the top. Such an arrangement not only exhibits meats and similar foodstuffs to advantage, but it also performs the exceedingly important service of preventing patrons from handling the fresh cuts of meat and testing the tenderness thereof with a punch of the finger or thumb, an insanitary practice which has become very common in markets.

Stalls for the sale of fish and other sea food should be segregated from the others in a separate room, in order that the characteristic odors attending them will not permeate the market hall proper, and so that the handling of these products can be accomplished without bringing them in contact with other parts of the building.

The typhoid fly, the rat, and the mouse are the chief pests which infest a market. Every possible means should be employed to minimize their numbers.

Good light and ventilation are not only important from a sanitary point of view, but add greatly to the attractiveness of a market.

Somewhere on the market property, preferably outside of the inclosed market hall, a suitable comfort station should be constructed.

FIG. 1.—VIEW OF "FARMERS' LINE" ALONG THE CURB OF EASTERN MARKET, ONE OF WASHINGTON'S SIX MUNICIPAL RETAIL MARKETS.

FIG. 2.—VIEW SHOWING THE INCLOSED BUILDING AND OPEN SPACE CONSTITUTING A $55,000 RETAIL MARKET OF A MIDDLE WESTERN CITY.

[This market is a comparative failure, due to its poor location.]

FIG. 3.—PORTION OF FANEUIL HALL MARKET IN BOSTON, SHOWING BUILDING FOR SALE OF MEATS, BUTTER, FISH, ETC., AND THE OPEN SPACE FOR PRODUCERS' WAGONS.

[One of the oldest market places in the country, which still remains a thriving trade center.]

FIG. 1.—OPEN PART OF THE ELK STREET MARKET, BUFFALO, SHOWING INCLOSED BUILDING IN THE DISTANCE.

[Farmers and hucksters sell at both wholesale and retail along the curbs.]

FIG. 2.—PARTIAL VIEW OF THE 10-ACRE OPEN MARKET AT ROCHESTER, N. Y.

[Note steel sheds and brick pavement. While originally a wholesale market, it now caters to the consumer as well.]

FIG. 3.—A SECTION OF THE FARMERS' RETAIL CURB MARKET AT DUBUQUE, IOWA.

[On Saturdays there have been as many as sixteen blocks like this. Photograph by J. H. Spencer, Dubuque, Iowa.]

FIG. 1.—AN OLD-TIME MUNICIPAL RETAIL MARKET IN PITTSBURGH LONG AGO DISCARDED BECAUSE THE SHIFTING OF POPULATION REDUCED THE TRADE.

FIG. 2.—ONE OF DENVER'S "NEIGHBORHOOD MARKETS," WHERE FARMERS SELL TO THE HOUSEWIVES IN THE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS.

FIG. 3.—PEARL STREET MARKET IN CINCINNATI, AN EXAMPLE OF THE LONG, NARROW TYPE OF MARKET HALL LOCATED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET.

FIG. 1.—CLEVELAND'S NEW WEST SIDE MARKET, A BEAUTIFUL BUT NEEDLESSLY EXPENSIVE INSTITUTION.

[A type of the broader construction in market buildings.]

FIG. 2.—INTERIOR VIEW OF SAME.

[Note sanitary equipment and 13-inch double-dial scales hung in plain view of customers.]

FIG. 3.—A VIEW OF DENVER'S BIG WHOLESALE AND RETAIL FARMERS' MARKET, SHOWING FOUR OF THE NINE STEEL SHEDS.

There is no doubt that modern sanitary equipment combined with refrigeration service is an expensive item in the construction of a market. However, the day of filthy, unattractive, and poorly equipped markets is passing. If the municipal retail market is to compete successfully with progressive private establishments, then it must assume a high standard. In fact, it should be a model of efficiency and sanitation, so that other retail agencies will be influenced toward improvement in these directions.

The increased possibilities of mechanical refrigeration in connection with a retail market are being demonstrated continually. It not only furnishes the most convenient and sanitary method of cooling small storage compartments and counters in the market hall proper, but cold-storage rooms in the basement or on the second floor can be made of great value. Some of these rooms should be subdivided into a number of individual slat lockers, to be rented to dealers who wish to keep their surplus stock in good condition from day to day. If desired, other rooms can be used for commercial storage, a feature which should be very attractive, especially in those places that lack privately owned facilities of this nature.

In every large city there is much complaint from residents who have no storage space available, regarding the impossibility of renting cold-storage facilities in units small enough for family use. Commercial storage plants have not found it profitable, as yet, to cater to such small consignments, the bother more than offsetting any charges which this class of business will stand. However, there is a distinct need for just this kind of service. Many private homes, boarding houses, small restaurants, and other similar institutions in the community can not deal in large enough quantities to make practical the use of present commercial storage facilities. What they desire is a place, not too far distant, where they may store a case of eggs or barrel of fruit with the privilege of withdrawing small quantities once or twice a week. There are many problems of detail to be worked out before such service can be made efficient and satisfactory, but no better medium of experiment and demonstration is needed than the cold-storage equipment of a municipal market.

Such an institution should be dedicated to the service of the community, and consequently the matter of trouble or lack of profit from such business ought not to prohibit a sincere effort to give the people the storage facilities in question.

The construction of the open part of a retail market devoted to the accommodation of producers' wagons, hucksters' wagons, and pushcarts, depends to a great extent on the space available. Many cities, especially the larger ones, have no place other than the middle of the street or the street curb to use for this purpose. Under these conditions it is difficult to arrange for any satisfactory protective agencies overhead except the simple canvas coverings of varied construction furnished by the dealers themselves.

In cases where there is a suitable site for an open market inside of the property line, certain very desirable improvements can be made profitably. For sanitary reasons, as well as for convenience, the space should be paved with brick or some other suitable material (Pl. XI, fig. 2), and proper facilities installed for flushing and drainage. Steel sheds (Pl. XI, fig. 2) to protect both the seller's load of products and the buyer should be erected. In retail markets these sheds are usually provided with a raised concrete walk running lengthwise through the center, on which the displaying, buying, and selling of products are carried on. If the open retail market is to be used as a wholesale market as well (Pl. XIII, fig. 3) then the size of the sheds and stall arrangement often needs to be varied to suit local conditions and customs prevalent among the wholesale trade.

FINANCING THE MARKET.

When funds of any considerable amount are needed, the ordinary bond issue is used most commonly to provide for the establishment of city markets. When curb or other unimproved open markets are used, the small expense incurred can be met from the funds of some established department of the city government.

Many cities measure the success of their markets by the revenue which they derive therefrom. In so far as revenues are an indication of the amount of business transacted, the practice is not especially subject to criticism, but when municipal markets are prized mainly for the high returns

which they make from excessive stall rent, then it is very evident that the primary purpose of the market is being defeated by the city itself. In building a retail public market it should be the aim to furnish first-class equipment for the handling of food products at just as low a rental as is possible, considering the running expenses, investment, interest, and depreciation. A reduction of overhead expense is essential if retail quotations are to be lowered materially. A public market should perform this function of lessening the high operating charges of the retailer, and then measures should be taken which will cause this saving to be evidenced in cheaper prices to the consumer.

Considering the financial management of a successful market, there are, very evidently, three methods of operation—at a loss, at cost, or at a profit. Any deficiency resulting from the first method must needs be made up by funds derived from some form of tax. It could be justified from a practical point of view only in case the low stall rents charged were responsible for reduced retail prices and marked communal benefits which might result from the effect of the market as a retail-price governor. However, on account of the fact that under average administration the savings effected by such low rentals do not accrue always to the benefit of the consumer, and inasmuch as the policy of conducting such an institution at a loss is apt to engender a great amount of opposition, it is no doubt wise to use some other system.

As the matter of large net profits to be gained from a market is incompatible with the whole municipal-market idea, it remains for one to dwell on the advantages of the second method named, that of conducting the market at cost, with the possible addition of a reserve fund to be used in retiring a certain percentage of the bonds at stated intervals. This idea seems to be the most satisfactory when viewed from all angles. It contemplates making the market self-sustaining, a good feature in any business proposition. It makes for very nominal stall fees, thus lowering the overhead costs to the renter. It placates to a great extent that class of citizens who oppose every civic improvement that calls for an expenditure of money.

Whatever the system employed, it is very essential that in leasing market stalls the city retain full control, making the duration of the lease short, and tenure subject to full compliance with all the rules and regulations of the market. In order to vary rentals when necessary, eradicate dishonesty in all forms, enforce sanitary measures, and apply desirable ideas for the general improvement of the municipal market service, it is necessary that the occupancy of a market stall be subject to speedy termination on the part of the management when conditions warrant.

One of the large eastern cities, owner of 11 municipal markets, recently faced a crisis in the conduct of this phase of city activity, due to lack of foresight in the financial policy employed when the various markets were built. In order to recover quickly the amount expended for a market, it was the habit to sell the stalls at public auction. Under this system, by the payment of an annual license and rental, the stall practically became the property of the purchaser. It could be rented, traded, or sold the same as any other possession. As a result, when changed conditions necessitated higher stall charges in order to provide a surplus for much needed market repairs, this move on the part of the city was met by a suit, instituted by the dealers, denying the city's right to increase the rent specified in the original bill of sale. It required about two years' strenuous work on the part of the municipality's legal department to secure from the courts a sustaining verdict, and in the meantime the markets suffered greatly through depreciation.

Under such a system the value of public property accrues to the benefit of an individual, as is shown by the fact that in this city some of the market stalls are appraised as high as $3,000, although their purchase price was not more than half that much. Many are subrented for a sum that will bring 10 per cent on their present value and up to 20 per cent on the original investment. Instances are related of Italian lessees who are now living in their native country mainly on the revenue which they derive from subrenting the stalls which they hold in the markets of the city mentioned.

The privileges of subletting space in a municipal market and transferring a lease to another party are freely offered

by many cities to stall renters. A little thought should make it evident that either concession is detrimental to the best interests of the market enterprise. By keeping in mind the fact that one of the chief functions of a municipal market is to lower food costs by reducing the overhead expenses of the dealer, it can be seen plainly that the subletting or transfer of a stand, for a substantial money consideration, adds an unnecessary financial burden, the amount of which the new occupant must needs try to recover from the buying public.

It is also manifestly unfair to other citizens not so favored for a municipality to furnish low-priced facilities to certain individuals, namely, the stall renters, by the manipulation of which these individuals can realize substantial unearned increment. However, this is exactly what happens when a city leases a desirable municipal market stall for $72 a year and the renter transfers his lease to a third party for a $1,200 cash consideration, or sublets the stall at the rate of $300 per annum. While this is a hypothetical case, its parallel in market transactions can often be found.

Inasmuch as a public market is a community institution, paid for and sustained out of public funds, all values which it creates should be returned to the municipality, except a fair remuneration which necessarily must be paid the stall renters in the shape of profits for the service which they perform. In order that this condition may prevail, one of the requisites is that there be no subletting or transfer of stalls unless, perchance, unusual conditions seem to justify such action. The original renter of a stand should be the user, and when his occupancy is terminated, the space should be given to the first applicant on the waiting list or drawn for by lot.

MARKET REGULATIONS AND MANAGEMENT.

Probably the average municipal market suffers as much from the lack of proper business management as from any other one thing. The larger proportion of markets are left to manage themselves, and then the cities possessing them condemn the lack of satisfactory service. Is it a cause of wonder that in such markets dealers are in control, prices

are fixed, patronage dwindles, and the expected benefits do not materialize? Considering average conditions, how can a city treasurer's office, a board of public works, or a caretaker at $40 per month be expected to conduct such an institution successfully when acquainted with neither the problems of a retail public market nor the service which it should render the people? A competent managing official, therefore, can be reckoned among the chief needs of any city that inaugurates a municipal-market system, and such an official should have not only understanding but vision.

After a market is opened to the public, there are two annoying problems which are of almost constant recurrence. To secure healthy competition among sellers, thus doing away with price fixing, and to eliminate dishonesty in all its forms, are tasks beset with difficulties. Most cities give up the attempt, but one of the middle-western municipalities has solved the proposition to its satisfaction. The city retains absolute control of the market. Full rein is given the superintendent of markets, and all responsibility is placed upon him. When he rents either the outside or inside stalls it is expressly stipulated that the prospective occupant can sell there only as long as he deals fairly with the public and so conducts his business that it does not become detrimental to the best interests of the market. It required the elimination of only three or four undesirables to impress upon all the other dealers the fact that competition and fair dealing must prevail on that market. As a result, not a single complaint of dishonesty has been made by patrons for nearly two years. Better still, no suggestion of fixed prices is apparent, all dealers working on the principle of a large volume of business at a small margin of profit, rather than the opposite method so often apparent in the present retail system.

The efficiency of many municipal markets is greatly reduced by their subserviency to political influence. Often market stalls are made awards for party service, as are also the offices and positions which a market affords. It is hardly necessary to comment on the destructive effect which such a condition exerts both on the market itself and on the benefits which it should render the community.

There are many who consider the matter of a credit and delivery service in connection with a public market as a

debatable question. This would seem to depend on what are to be considered the logical functions of such a market. If a reduction of food prices through lessened overhead expense to the dealer is one, then credit and delivery at his expense should be discountenanced. To afford any considerable economy, all goods on a municipal retail market should be sold for cash, and carried home unless a common delivery system is available, the charges of which are paid by the purchaser. The equipment for such a system could be furnished by private enterprise, if that prove satisfactory, or, if expedient, by the city itself. Such a method of delivery in connection with a market is very desirable and can be made practical.

Many markets have found it advisable to rule out telephones on the ground that a telephone order calls for delivery, and, in turn, establishes a credit charge, if, for any reason, collection can not be made when the goods are delivered. This rule finds further justification in the fact that ordering by telephone prevents the housewife from personally inspecting, before buying, the quality and assortment of products which the market offers.

PUBLICITY OF MARKET NEWS.

The possibilities for good of a rationally conducted market news service in connection with a municipal market system are just being realized. The average housewife suffers an almost daily loss through her ignorance of what products the market most liberally affords and current quotations on foodstuffs in general. Intelligent publicity of reliable information of this nature should prove to many cities a service rivaling in value any other feature of public-market activity.

The city of Berlin has worked out this idea very satisfactorily in connection with its municipal wholesale markets. Several municipal sales agents who sell in the central market, either at auction or private sale, report their transactions to the city authorities, and they, in conjunction with the state market police, publish the prices obtained in the wholesale market each day in the Official Market Bulletin. This practice has proved a meritorious one and is indorsed alike by dealers, trade papers, consumers, and others interested in the distribution of food products.

IN CONCLUSION.

Let it be said that this discussion does not aim to cover fully the field of municipal retail markets. Only some of the more salient points which face a city interested in this problem are treated. Numberless questions of a more incidental nature demand careful consideration when the actual construction and management of a market are attempted. Nor is it thought that all of the conclusions reached herein can be applied successfully to every city. Unusual local conditions or prejudices might render advisable an entirely different treatment than is here set forth.

While the municipal retail market surely has its place in the present system of food distribution, its introduction should be accompanied with even more mature judgment than would attend the establishment of business institutions by private agencies, for, in committing itself to the retail-market policy, a city is departing somewhat from the conservative path. The public market is not a panacea for the weaknesses of the retail system, nor is it advocated that its use should displace the old established agencies of retail marketing. Rather, its service should supplement, cooperate with, and to some extent regulate that which they give.